DORA COYNE; OR, HID IN THE HEART.

BY JESSIE M. E. SAXBY.

Author of "Gerta's Newrsgaf," "Lindeman Brothers," etc.

"This place belongs to Lady Coyne, of course?" p. 36.

CHAPTER V.

THE UNKNOWN FRIEND.

NORTHCOTE, the village near which the accident took place, was not more than twenty miles from Hackleton, and Sir James was soon there. He had no difficulty in finding the inn where the stranger lay ill and alone. The people of the place knew Sir James well enough, and were ready to give him all the information he desired. He was taken to the room where the young man lay, and, of course, recognised Mr. Buist at once, although his handsome face was plastered and disfigured.

He had not recovered his senses, and rolled his head restlessly from side to side, occasionally murmuring disconnected words. Sir James stooped over him and asked in a kind voice—

"Can I do anything for you?"

Although the invalid did not know who spoke, some gleam of reason must have connected the speaker with Dora in his mind, for he opened his eyes and said—

"I wish you'd bring her. She might come when she knows I'm so ill. She ought to forgive me now. Oh, do come to me, Dora. Dora! Dora! do forgive me."

Sir James sat down and put his hand to his brow for a moment, but was recalled to himself at once by the innkeeper saying—

"Is it the gentleman you expected to find, sir?"

"Yes. But I—I do not know him well. I am—I am acting for others."

There was a long pause, only broken by the moans and ejaculations of the sick man, but it was bitter for Sir James

to listen to these, for the name of Dora was mixed up in them in a way that plainly told that her lover had not forgotten her, however much she might have forgotten him.

After a few minutes' silence the visitor rose. "I can be of no use here," he said, "but I should like you to get a good nurse for—this gentleman. I should like him to have the very best medical attendance, and every comfort possible. I shall pay all expenses, and you must use every means that money can command. All I ask is—don't tell any one who it is that gives you these instructions: particularly, do not let this gentleman know when he gets better. You can tell him, if he is very inquisitive, that an——eccentric philanthropist acted the Samaritan to him!"

"Might I ask his name, sir, and if he has any near friends, 'cause the doctor said, sir, that he might most likely slip away afore long. He got a power of damage, poor young man!"

"He has no relatives nearer than cousins, and I do not know where they are to be found. His name is Buist."

"Ah! a foreigner most like. Well, it's lucky for him that a good Christian like yourself, Sir James, has come after him; and I'll see that your instructions be carried out."

"Thank you. I shall come, or send, to enquire after him soon again," and then Sir James went away to the room he had engaged for the night, and sat down and thought.

What his cogitations were like we will not stop to enquire; they were not all pleasant: more than once they upset the wonted calm of his demeanour, and sent him to pace the room after the manner of that impetuous young man, Fredrich Wilheim Buist.

But such unusual behaviour on the part of Sir James disappeared ere long. He went to bed and slept soundly, and he issued forth next morning as benign and alert as was his wont. He enquired for the patient, and hearing he was still delirious did not go into the room, but repeated his instructions to the landlord and went away.

Later in the day he drove up to Mrs. Falconer's door and walked into her drawing-room with his customary serenity of manner and expression. Robina, nervously scanning his face, was conscious of a little smile sent to her at once, and it encouraged her.

"I was sorry to defer our drive, Dora," he said in his quiet way, "but I had to go off last night to see a sick person."

"You are always doing something nice for somebody," Mrs. Falconer struck in.

"I was—glad to—be—of—use in—this case," he answered slowly. "The—the person is very ill, but I think will recover. I don't know him—intimately; but I am—interested in—him."

Robina understood what he meant her to gather from those words, and she looked gratefully at him, which caused Sir James to smile at her again, and to say, "I daresay Dora will not object to your coming with us, my dear."

Certainly Dora did not object. If the truth were told, she generally preferred a sister, or brother, to accompany her when she went out with Sir James.

"I am so glad you have asked Robina," she said, "for you know she is even more interested than I am in poor people, and she will like to see this Home of yours."

"Oh, is it the convalescent Home, the new one, you are going to this forenoon?" Robina asked.

"Yes," said Sir James. "Dora wished to go. She wants to have her finger in all my pies, I think."

"I do want to share in your charitable labours," Dora said earnestly. "I hope that doesn't seem like interfering beyond what I ought."

"Oh no, Dora. It helps me. I am very pleased to find you so interested in all I do. I thought you would be."

He looked at her, and there was so much satisfaction in his look that Robina said within herself, "I am surely mistaken. It will turn out all right for Dora, and for him, after all. I wish I believed it would be as well with poor Kaiser."

The Convalescent Home was a pleasant house within a garden not far from Oldham Grange, and here Sir James had collected about a dozen people, too respectable to be on the parish when ill, too poor to be able to give themselves change and rest. Some were recovering health fast, others were merely adding a little more to their wonted small stock of strength. A few were only gathering power to look death in the face by-and-by.

All welcomed their benefactor with brightening eyes and words of gratitude, and when, with very becoming pride, he introduced Dora as "the lady who is to be my wife soon," there was quite a fervour of good wishes and pleasant looks bestowed upon her.

"I hope we shall see you often, ma'am," said the matron of the Home. "Sir James is that kind, he comes and reads to some, and chats with others, and cheers everybody. And it will be delightful having you come too, ma'am."

"I see every room is occupied at present," remarked Sir James with much satisfaction, as they were leaving, and Dora, thinking he had wanted room for some one else, said, "Were you wanting to bring the person you were seeing last night to the Home when he gets better?"

The face that had been beaming for the last two hours clouded over, and he said in a low tone—

"No, Dora,—he is not the sort of person—to bring there. I wasn't thinking of—him just at present."

CHAPTER VI.

"SENT OF GOD."

Sir James *did* think a great deal about Mr. Fredrich Wilheim Buist during those days, although the young man had been banished from his mind during that visit to the convalescent home. Sir James paid a good many visits to Northcote, and assured himself that his instructions regarding the invalid were being carried out. He did not go into the sick room a second time; he could do no good there, and he did not feel equal to listening to any more pathetic ravings. Moreover, he was anxious that the invalid should not recognise him, nor learn who it was that had befriended him.

When at last youth and a healthy constitution pulled Kaiser back from the jaws of death, and he woke up to know he had escaped "destruction" and "the devil," Sir James ceased going to the village at all.

There might be more reasons than one for that. The time of his marriage was drawing quite near, and there are always many and weighty things to be said and arranged and done when important personages take such a step.

Sir James had his hands full, but nevertheless he continued to help Kaiser still more in an indirect way (of which we shall hear more later on), and he set Robina's heart at rest regarding the young man.

Ever since the lovers had parted, Kaiser's name had been avoided by the Falconers in their ordinary conversation. They understood from his action that when he quarrelled with Dora he quarrelled with the whole family.

His visit to Hackleton was not mentioned by either Mrs. Falconer, or Robina, or Sir James; and Dora little dreamt

that while she was engrossed with preparations for her wedding, *he* was battling with grim death not far away. But though unconscious of his danger, Dora did not forget her old habit of remembering him in her prayers; and I do not doubt that the girl's petitions stood him in good stead during his time of peril.

"I may pray for Kaiser," she had told herself; "*that* cannot be wrong. I only wish he would learn to pray for himself."

Though she did not know it, Kaiser *was* learning. That cry to God, amid the crash and wreck of man's mighty handiwork, was the beginning; and when his senses came once more under the sway of reason, and he knew himself saved, the young man began to review his past actions.

When we lie helpless on the brink of our graves, we look back upon life with sight clarified and judgment unbiassed. We read ourselves from another point of view than our own, for we seem to ourselves other persons.

Then, too, we feel the *littleness* of all earthly aims and objects—the weakness of our greatest efforts, the loneliness, the impotence, the necessities of a soul without God.

Self-retrospection at such times and under such circumstances must be condemnatory. Well for the awakened heart, lacerating itself, if God draws near in such an hour with comfort and good cheer. None but God can heal then.

"I've been all wrong, all wrong," thought young Buist, as he lay watching the shadows flicker on the wall, and knew that he had been "spared for some divine purpose." "Dora was altogether in the right, but I can't tell her so *now*. Oh, if I had but seen things as I do now in time! Poor Dora! How I vexed her! and she was always so patient. I can just see her now—the sad, pleading look when I mocked at things she held sacred, the earnest, gentle words when she tried to persuade me to turn from evil! I laughed when she called my peccadillos 'the beginning of crime'; but I know to-day that a 'weakness' *is* a sin, as she said. Fool, fool that I was to think that love could survive in a heart like hers when trust and respect were killed. She was travelling heavenward, and it was not in the power of mortal man to turn her from her course. Nor did I wish to *turn her*, I suppose. If I had analysed my own wishes, I think I should have found that something in me was anchored to her religion; but in my headstrong impetuosity I wanted to prove *my* power over her as paramount to all else. The broad road on which I was can never lie alongside of her way of life, and since I would not step over to her side and go as she went, Dora—had to—drop me. *Had to*—my darling! She didn't want to let me go. How she held my hand and looked into my eyes, and whispered, 'Kaiser! Kaiser! our love must rest on God, or must be put aside!' And I wouldn't let it rest there, and she has put it aside, and will be happy with a man like-minded to herself, and she must forget me. Oh, yes: Dora must forget me."

As the days crept slowly on, and he could think more clearly, as he learned, in a feeble, disconnected way, to ask God to pity and help him, strength of mind came, and, from the chaos of his lost love, sanctified by ennobling pain, a manly resolution formed itself.

"Though I have lost Dora, I will not forget her wishes and prayers for me. God has mercifully spared my life, and with His aid I shall strive after a better kind of existence. I shall retrieve the past, God helping me, and be more worthy of the love that was mine. I am young yet, and I had a healthy body before that accident. They say now that I won't be any the worse for it, if I take care. I'll take care. Youth and health are the best of God's gifts, and I want—oh, I do want—to give them to Him.

"I can't stop loving Dora. No, though she will soon be another man's wife. But I don't think there's anything wrong in the feeling I have for her. I would not stand in the way of her happiness for the world now. I am as sorry as can be that I went to her home that day; but I expect Mrs. Falconer was too wise to tell Dora what I said. I wonder if it would please her to know that I am changed? Yes, she would like it in one way, but it might disturb her in another. I'll keep silence, and I'll not revisit Hackleton for years; not till I can meet Dora—Lady Coyne—quietly. Such a time will come, please God. *This* agony cannot last long; I pray it cannot! Lying here I am the prey of my thoughts, but when I am up and about I shall set to work. What I find to do I shall do with my might, and this longing and pain will grow less."

Once, in those convalescent days, he wondered that no old friends from Hackleton had come to inquire after him, and he thought it just a little unkind of the Falconers and others, who surely ought to let resentment die in face of such affliction. That he was known he gathered from the fact of nurse and the inn people addressing him by name.

"Has no one been to ask for me?" he asked; and then he heard that no acquaintances had identified him until a philanthropic gentleman, hearing that a stranger lay ill and unknown there, had come and acted the good Samaritan.

The innkeeper had no scruples about telling a lie, if by so doing he could more conveniently carry out the instructions of the wealthy Sir James Coyne; so, when Kaiser's questions grew persistent, the man declared that no person knew the name of the philanthropist. He had paid all the expenses of the illness, and had come and gone, and was not to be traced; so, in Kaiser's new and humbled state of mind, he just said that the stranger must have been "a man sent of God," and let the matter rest there.

He had still further reason to believe that God's ministers were about his path when he returned to London, and on going to the bank for needful cash, was informed that a handsome sum had been paid in to his account by some person or persons unknown.

"There was a letter left here for you which may explain what seems to surprise you," said the manager; and he took a sealed packet from his safe and handed it to Kaiser, who was yet more mystified by its contents, which ran thus:—

"I am your debtor, and you are God's! Take the help I give as from heaven. It is meant as an aid to your onward progress in spiritual things. I cannot doubt that the arrest which was laid upon you will have the right effect, and that you will learn that man should not live for himself, but for the glory of God."

That was all, and the brief letter was written in the round, characterless hand of a clerk, no date, no signature attached, and no expression in it which could lead him to guess from whence it came.

"This is very extraordinary!" Kaiser ejaculated. Not for one instant did his thoughts turn to Sir James as his benefactor. They had met very seldom, and the older man was more precise, more reserved, more dictatorial in the presence of Mr. Fredrich Wilheim Buist than at any other time. Consequence: Mr. Fredrich Wilheim Buist was most aggressive, most flippant, most reckless when Sir James was present. They did not like each other; they did not desire each other's friendship. Sir James was the last man on earth that Kaiser would have accepted favour from.

"I shouldn't wonder if it is some one of the many who 'did' old Uncle Fraser, and conscience has put them up to paying it back in this way. Or, maybe, some relative of father's. Oh, well, it is no good guessing. I had better fall back upon my first supposition, 'sent of God,' and make the best of it."

That was the end of Mr. Buist's conjectures, but not the end of his good intentions.

CHAPTER VII.

COMING HOME.

In old times, whenever he had set himself to think of choosing a line of life, his inclinations had suggested the medical profession, but it had never come to anything. Now that his mind was fixed he returned to that notion, and in a short time resolved to go up to Edinburgh and begin the necessary course of study.

"That's the place of all others in which to learn surgery, and I'll see if I can't qualify as a medical missionary. I should get over things abroad; and that sort of work is the grandest field of any for 'active service.' I want to be in active service. I want to buckle on my armour, and make up for lost time. I will do good work yet, God helping me."

Yet he hesitated and lingered a little longer (can we not pardon poor Kaiser for so doing?), until the joy-bells rang for Dora Falconer's wedding.

He saw the announcement in the papers, and he read it with dim eyes and a pale face. After a little his head fell upon his folded arms as they rested on the table, and he slid to his knees. There was a little bit of the battle still to fight; and in that humble attitude, very still and all alone, Kaiser fought it out. When he rose from his knees he had buried the bright hope of his youth—the love of his life—in the deepest cell of his heart, and had given the key of its door into the hands of his Maker.

After that he went out quietly, and strolled to Oxford Street. Going into a book shop he chose a beautiful little Bible, bound in crimson leather—Dora's favourite colour and type. He went back to his rooms and wrote a note, which he enclosed with the book; and after wrapping both up as carefully as if they were dead children, he posted them. The note was to Robina Falconer, somehow people always applied to *her* when they wanted help to do a delicate bit of business completely. He said to her—

"Will you convey my best wishes to Dora, and ask her to accept the enclosed as a small remembrance of an old *friend?* Pardon my long silence, and believe that I shall always remember you and yours with grateful affection."

When his packet was posted he said, "I'll go and work now," and accordingly, with some of his old impulsive haste, he packed up, and a day later found him in Edinburgh, making arrangements to begin his 'varsity career, and quite forgetful that he had not given Robina an address, so that, if she wished to reply to his note, she couldn't.

The wedding was over, the honeymoon tour was over, and Sir James and Lady Coyne had come home to Oldham Grange.

No one who saw Dora, radiant and rosy on her return, could doubt that she was happy; no one could suppose who saw Sir James that he was not contented in his choice.

The Falconers were all at Oldham Grange to welcome the bridal couple home, and Mrs. Falconer was profoundly impressed by the manner in which Miss Coyne, when all were marshalled to an informal meal, stood by the chair at the head of the table, which had been her throne, and said,—

"*This* place belongs to Lady Coyne, of course?"

Dora flushed, and faltered—

"I think I am a little tired. Please let me be your guest this evening;" and she dropped into the seat at Sir James's left hand.

"I think we must indulge her to-night, Martha," said the master of the house, and Miss Coyne took her old place in silence; but Miss Susan's grimness abated a little after that, and she spoke more graciously to Dora than she had done before. Indeed, the whole party got on much better together than Sir James had at first anticipated.

Robina sat quiet, as was her wont, not saying much, but very observant.

"Doe *is* happy and contented," so her thoughts ran, "and it is not going to be so difficult for her to take her proper place here as I feared it might be. That sweet, winning way of hers carries all before it, even the Misses Coyne. And Sir James is happy, too——"

Her musings were cut short by Sir James coming to her, sitting down close by and saying—

"And how has the world been using *you* since we left, my dear?"

"As usual—that is, kindly," Robina answered, with her own tranquil smile.

"I think," he said, in a low voice, but with his usual deliberation, "that you will like to hear the latest news I have of Mr. Fredrich Wilheim Buist. He has quite recovered—quite. And I think that accident has done him good—in some ways. He has set to a regular employment, I understand."

"Oh, I am glad. Have you seen him? Where is he?"

"I have not seen him. I knew very little of Mr. Fredrich Wilheim Buist, and I do not think he had any desire to cultivate my acquaintance. I do not know where he is exactly, though I have ascertained that he has begun to work with some earnest purpose."

"I wish I knew his address, for I had a note from him, and I should like to answer it. It was a kind little note. He—he sent a small marriage gift for Dora."

"Very kind of Mr. Fredrich Wilheim Buist. Have you given her the—gift?"

"No; but I brought it. I left it with the note, which I wanted her to see, in my muff upstairs."

"I should like to see the note and the gift by-and-by. Dora will show them."

When the ladies went up to put on their out-of-door garments, preparatory to leaving, Robina drew Dora a little aside, and whispered—

"Doe, my darling, there was a little present sent you, through me, from an old friend. I think you will be pleased to have it; and his note was very nice. I brought the note to show you."

She put the little packet in Dora's hand and kissed her, and was aware that her sister's hand shook as it closed over Kaiser's gift.

Sir James took his guests home in his own carriage, and when he returned he found his sisters alone in the drawing-room. He did not ask any question when he saw Dora was not there, but sat down and looked gravely into the fire.

Then Miss Coyne said, "Dora was a little tired, so asked to be excused, and has gone to her room for the night."

"She has had a fatiguing day," he answered.

He sat with his sisters for some time, till, in fact, their usual hour of retiring, and he talked with them in the old way, so that they forgot that changes had come, and that there was a Lady Coyne in Oldham Grange. *(To be continued.)*

CROSS-PURPOSES.

MAY RILEY SMITH.

What sorrow we should beckon unawares,
  What stinging nettles in our path would grow,
If God should answer all our thoughtless prayers,
  Or bring to harvest the poor seed we sow!

The storm for which you prayed, whose kindly shock
  Revived your fields, and blessed the fainting air,
Drove a strong ship upon the cruel rock,
  And one I loved went down in shipwreck there.

I ask for sunshine on my grapes to-day;
  You plead for rain to kiss your drooping flowers;
And thus within God's patient hand we lay
  These intricate cross-purposes of ours.

I greeted with cold grace and doubting fears
  The guest who proved an angel at my side,
And I have shed more bitter, burning tears
  Because of hopes fulfilled than prayers denied.

Then be not clamorous, O restless soul,
  But hold thy trust in God's eternal plan!
He views our life's dull weaving as a whole;
  Only its tangled threads are seen by man!

Dear Lord, vain repetitions are not meet
  When we would bring our messages to Thee.
Help us to lay them then at Thy dear feet
  In acquiescence, not garrulity!

GIRLS.

BY SARAH TYTLER.

XI.—The Mischief a Girl can Do.

Unfortunately there is another side to the picture. There are girls who are pests and scourges to their families, growing up selfish and wilful, heedless and reckless, discontented and fretful, demanding all, and giving back nothing, bent on their own ends, and ready to sacrifice all who come between, even the mother who bore these girls, even the father who toils for them. Woe betide the family whose eldest daughter, the forerunner and frequently the pattern of those who follow, is of this type!

No doubt such hardened absence of natural feeling is not developed in a day, and there is many an utterly heartless, unscrupulous woman who, if her later deeds had been predicted to her when she was still a girl, would have cried out in horror like the anointed king of old, "Is thy servant a dog that she should do such a thing?" But there are seldom wanting in girls indications of what—without great spiritual convulsions—their future lives are likely to be. A girl may be very thoughtless, foolish, idle, and yet one may cheerfully hope that she will live to amend the error of her ways. But if she is also insubordinate, grudging, spiteful, an inveterate strife-maker, engrossed with her own concerns, and indifferent to those of her neighbours, hoarding up her own possessions while not disinclined to share in the possessions of others, at the same time mocking and taunting the single-heartedness and generosity which permits her to do so, and much more disposed to boast of her own cleverness in securing the advantage she has taken, than to shrink in affront from any exposure of the meanness and greed of the act, then one can only sadly pray that God may have mercy on her near kindred. For a bad woman almost invariably strikes at the home life; it is the inner circle of her family she devastates, and the hearth she desecrates.

Such a girl may even as a girl vex, wound, and alienate by degrees all around her. She may keep up a constant atmosphere of irritation and injustice in which domestic peace will wither, and family affection sicken nigh to death.

The offender may not be always undutiful and unfeeling; the winter of her discontent may still be broken by spring and summer days. Some members of the family may have a certain hold over her, she may have her good and bad moods and moments, but her influence on the whole is already disastrous. Unless her mother is the most meek-spirited, genial-tempered, and easy-minded of women, or unless the unsatisfactory member of the family is well balanced by others as loyal as this girl is disloyal, such a daughter is in danger of goading her mother to exasperation, or of souring and embittering her, or of well-nigh breaking her heart.

The girl will perplex, mortify, and distress her father, with whom she is probably less defiant and disagreeable just because their paths do not cross each other to the same extent, and because she belongs to an order of women who are bullies and cowards on one side of their nature. They are therefore more amenable to the superior authority and force which are found generally in the men of the household, while towards fellow-women, whether mothers or sisters, these most ungentle members of their sex are apt to harbour no sentiment save that of the very coolest family regard strongly dashed with disdain. Such girls alternate between the conditions of boisterous or supercilious patronesses, and those of relentless tyrants and persecutors of their fellow women, however nearly related to them.

Even with all the comparative moderation of her behaviour to her father, a girl of this description will fill him with doubt and dissatisfaction; doubt of the domestic management which can produce such a result, suspicion of the fairness and kindness of the other members of the family, however innocent they may be; weary dissatisfaction with the whole state of things. No wonder! In return for his laborious days and anxious nights he finds a house divided against itself. He never knows, when he comes home, whether it will present to him smiling faces, cheerful voices, and a quietly happy welcome which will fall like balm on his harassed spirit, or trouble and disturbance on all sides, flushed cheeks, flashing eyes, raised tones, nobody at liberty to mind him, unless it be to appeal to him with complaints and reproaches, on which it is impossible for him to give an opinion at a moment's notice, which make his head and heart alike ache. If such a father is cross and morose, passionate and unreasonable, is there much to be surprised at?

A thoroughly low-minded, ill-tempered, selfish girl in any rank will sap her brothers' faith in womankind, close up their hearts against her and her sex generally, and drive the young men to seek their pleasures apart from her and their home.

On younger sisters, if they do not take this baleful sister as a warning, and shrink from her, adopting the tone most opposed to hers, her influence is the most injurious which can be imagined next to a bad mother's influence. If the girl is giddy she will infect her sisters, while they are still too young to judge for themselves, with a spirit of levity. Whatever superficial refinement they may retain, they will grow both bold and coarse in mind and manners, self-asserting, self-seeking, wrangling. Very likely she is one of the undoubtedly large public who, in pursuit of mere amusement and excitement, are certain to quench what intellectual thirst they possess, and get rid of any time hanging on their hands, at sources which are neither pure, nor true, nor honest, neither invigorating nor ennobling. When it comes to that, the reader does not seek to be either invigorated or ennobled. The reading in which she indulges, with which she does not hesitate to supply her young sisters, eager and restless to be as familiar as she is with such forbidden fruit, will, if it does nothing worse, certainly render these girls' tastes still coarser, and their inclinations more unbridled. The whole band will acquire a certain atmosphere, more or less veiled, of riotous lawlessness and revolt, which will cause them to be shunned by all steady, simple believers in goodness, and lovers of duty.

These unhappy girls while little more than children will invade territories which ought to have been sealed to them till womanhood had made them wiser. They will be premature women of the world, hardened flirts and coquettes. They will have their poor little love affairs and engagements. Girls as well as boys will play at and mock the most solemn and beautiful realities of life, will audaciously trifle with its tenderest mysteries, treading with rough feet and touching with rude hands wherever they go—till the rose in the bud has lost all its dewy freshness, all its lovely secrets, and is as dry, scentless, and stale as if it had been full blown from its birth. The future women into which these girls progress are almost without fail exacting and domineering, mercenary, small-hearted, and narrow-souled, even when they have not gone a few steps farther and become vicious or wicked.

There is another species of girl whose character is perhaps less easily deciphered in youth, yet who is also, whether as girl or woman, capable of much mischief. This girl is marked by a kind of spurious overdone sweetness and humility, which are without sincerity and steadfastness; she is weak and foolish without desiring to be anything else, with a weakness and folly closely allied to deceit and falsehood. She may not be absolutely ill-intentioned, but she offers no active resistance to evil, in whatever form it may present itself, where all right-principled people would stand firm. She has a tendency to pose even in girlhood as undervalued, misunderstood, and injured. One hears much more of her wrongs than of her rights; when she is brought to book on her trials she prevaricates and equivocates, ducking her head, so to speak, to escape the storm she has provoked. The very truth is brought into contempt by her uncertain advocacy of it; she is a soft, slippery, untrustworthy creature, taking in the simple-minded and credulous, and as often as not betraying them.

Alas, alas for the green garden of girlhood laid bare, and stripped of its golden apples when such girls represent it!

Occasionally wanton extravagance is the most marked trait in a girl with little conscience. I have heard of an honest, not over-rich gentleman, who was scandalised by getting a florist's account to the amount of five pounds, the price of moss rosebuds out of season, one of which had formed his daughter's daily offering for a period of months to a foolish lad of her acquaintance—a curious reversal of gallantry! I have heard of another father, one of the most deservedly honoured men of his generation, whose grey head was bowed with shame on the receipt, after his motherless daughter's marriage, of dressmakers' bills, the accumulation of years, which had been kept from him till then, the tardy payment of which taxed his slender resources to the utmost.

It does not seem to me that these girls were much more honest than a poor girl who fell into grievous disgrace. Her father had entrusted her with the few shillings which he had scraped together for the fortnight's rent of his house. On her way to pay it to the landlord she encountered another girl, who decoyed her into attending a village feast.[6] Before they had left the merry-making the girls between them spent, at shows and sweet-meat stalls, all save a few pence of the

money in the one girl's charge. The misappropriation was not discovered till the next fortnight's rent was due, when payment for a month was demanded by the landlord.

Let us say, in passing, that on the question of dress many vain, uncultured girls and women are little short of insane in their views and dealings.

There are girls and women who are drains in two senses on all the men with whom they are connected. Daughters, sisters, wives, not only drain their natural protectors' substance in order that the women may gratify the self-indulgence which only grows by gratification, they drain their fathers, brothers, husbands of all heart and hope for high deeds and worthy ambitions. How can a man who is distracted with the necessity of earning a handsome income in order that his wife, daughters, sisters, may be clothed in purple and fine linen and fare sumptuously every day, find the leisure, peace, and faith to labour for the public good, for Christianity, civilisation, science—whatever may be his field? It was not thus that Dorothy Wordsworth encouraged her brother to pen his poems, or Caroline Herschel enabled William Herschel to survey the skies with his telescope, or many a mother has stinted herself to give her boy his chance of true distinction. If women would have the men they love honourable in their generation, "heroes in the strife," the women no less than the men must learn

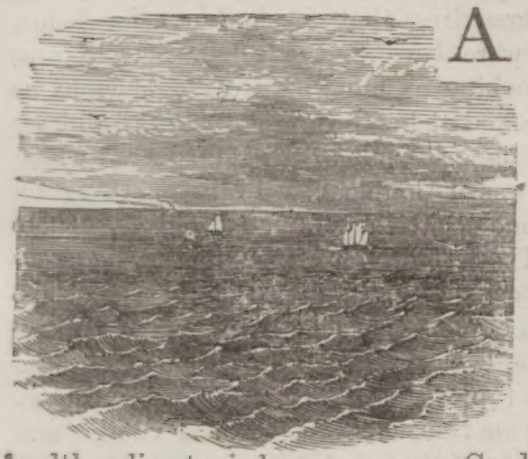
"To scorn delights and live laborious days."

Sometimes greed is the most prominent attribute of unamiable girls and women. The eldest daughter of a widowed and impoverished household, on her marriage carried with her the grand piano which had been her father's gift to her when she grew up, while he was still a man of ample means. This bride-elect removed her property in total disregard of several considerations. In the first place, when the gift was made to her she was still, as it were, the representative daughter of the house. In the second instance, the coveted piano could become, in consequence of the family's reverse of fortune, an important means of training and source of livelihood to her younger sisters.

The parasites, as one may call them, rather than honest members, who prey on families are at the same time the loudest in asserting the supremacy of the family relation when they have anything to gain by it. These girls and women who have done little or nothing for their kindred from the days of their childhood, upwards and downwards, unless, indeed, in serving unfortunate people for a cross and a discipline, will come forward unblushingly and demand as their right all the confidence and consideration, attention and devotion which could have been accorded to the most unselfish, truest, and kindest of relatives.

A VISIT TO THE CROFTERS.

BY EMMA CONWAY CLARKE.



A GREAT deal of attention is just now being directed to the condition of the Highland Crofters, and more especially to those whose misfortune it is to live in the island of Lewis.

This island of the Hebrides, favoured with a mild and healthy climate, is by no means a Garden of Eden, either in its scenery or its luxuriance. It is, for the most part, a flat and uninteresting stretch of peat-land and bog.

To those who have read Black's graphic story of the Princess of Thule, the charm of romance invests the island with interest; whilst to the political economist it offers a perplexing problem.

In the good old days of Scottish chiefs, when the land was common to the clan, the life of a crofter was one of content and plenty; but to-day, when the chieftain too often becomes a mere proprietor, indifferent to the welfare of his tenants, and eager only for his own enrichment, the crofter's life is one of struggle and hardship, rendered more bitter by the sense of injustice and the hopelessness of improving his condition.

In the autumn of the year 1886 I spent a week in Lewis, and, as so much is being written just now about the inhabitants of that island, perhaps some account of the visit may be of interest.

Tourists are rare in Lewis, for, whilst there are no natural beauties to attract, there are only two objects of much interest in the island.

The first of these is the castle at Stornoway, the residence of the owner of the island. It is a fine building in the Tudor style of architecture, surrounded by lovely grounds a hundred acres in extent, all artificially cultivated—every tree and shrub having been imported, and planted so as to produce the best effect. The walks through the grounds are lovely, commanding extensive views of Stornoway with its harbour, and the surrounding country with distant hills.

The other place of interest on the island is on the western side of it, and consists of a circle of Druidical stones, known by the natives as the "mourners," in consequence of their resemblance to shrouded figures.

Of course one could not leave the island without a visit to this spot, although it involved a solitary drive of fifteen miles across a barren moor. Accordingly, one morning I started from Stornoway in the best vehicle that could be obtained for the excursion. It was a rickety waggonette, guiltless of springs or paint, and drawn by a gaunt-looking horse that was a marvel of ugliness.

The departure of Mistress John Gilpin herself in her famous coach could hardly have excited more attention. Crowds assembled on the pavements, groups filled the doorways, heads leaned out from windows. Surely they must have thought the Englishwoman mad to take a drive in such an equipage merely to see some old stones about which there could be, from their point of view, neither beauty nor interest.

The drive was a novel one, through a wild and dismal country of moor and bog and peat, with just a clump of heather here and there. Sometimes one passed a deep, dark

The Druidical Stones at Callernish.

pond; here and there in the distance one saw a green oasis of pasture-land in the midst of the brown peat, and to these the pretty little Highland cattle are sent to graze.

Reaching, at length, the foot of a hill about 500 feet in height, the driver told me I must climb it in order to reach the stones, whilst he waited below.

Very soon I reached the summit, and stood amongst the stones of Callernish. This circle ranks second in interest to that of Stennis in Orkney, while it is more entire. The principal structure consists of a circle sixty-three feet in diameter, with a large central stone, and branching from the circumference, four lines of upright stones, forming a Maltese cross. The extreme points of the lines, running north and south, are about 600 feet apart; of those at right angles about 200 feet.

It was a weird feeling, that of being quite alone on that isolated hill-top, looking over the country through which we had driven, and seeing mile after mile of desolation. No human habitation visible, no labourer at work, no cattle grazing on the plains. The silence was as impressive as the solitude; the only sound being the distant murmur of the sea and the hum of a bumble-bee amongst the heather.

The mute, ghostly stones, some of them almost human in form, carried one's thoughts back to the far past, when they were first placed there, and one thought of the nations that had lived and conquered, fallen and died, since then:—of the transitoriness of human life, and of the grim immovability of these mystic stones keeping watch through all the ages.

Occupied with these thoughts, I turned at last to look at the view on the other side of the hill, and was startled to see standing near me a strange being who might have been standing there as long as the stones, judging from her old-world aspect and uncivilised garb. She was a short, strong-looking woman, wearing a coarse dress that reached not far below her knees; her feet were bare, and her hair matted and tangled. She was looking at me with eyes as curious as those with which I looked at her. Going forward to address her, I saw that on the opposite side of the hill to that which I had climbed there was a double row of huts straggling down the steep. Some looked like huge beehives, others like poultry sheds. They were built of rough stones, loosely put together without cement, and built to the height of five feet. A roof of peat, bound on with cords, rose from the walls. To many of the huts there was no chimney and no window, a hole in the top of the roof serving both purposes. Then it dawned upon me that this was a crofter village, and that the woman was one of the inhabitants.

I asked her if I might be allowed to go into one of the houses, as I should much like to see the interior of them. She replied that she did not understand much English, but that she was quite sure the crofters did not want ladies in their houses.

This was discouraging, but not daunting, so I walked on a little way, until I saw a wild-looking man, with long hair and bare feet, standing in his doorway. To him I repeated the request I had made to the woman, and he replied with a politeness that one would not have expected from his appearance, until one remembered that in the true Celt there is invariably a noble self-respect and respect for others which result in a courtesy not met with amongst the same class in any other nation.

He politely invited me in, and led me into a room so dark that I had to wait a few moments before I grew accustomed to the gloom, and then found that I was standing in a perfectly bare shed; my guide had passed into an inner chamber.

Some Crofters' Huts on the Hill.

and following him, I found myself in a room about twelve feet square. The floor was of hard clay; the walls of rough, unplastered stone; the roof of peat, covered with smoke and dust. There was no window nor chimney; a peat fire in the middle of the floor sent up a blue smoke, which escaped through a hole in the roof. Through this hole came one ray of light, falling on the fire and lighting up a group of five children, seated on the ground around it. There was no furniture in the room, only some shelves, on which was ranged the needful crockery. A rope tied across the room held the family wardrobe.

Here these people live through winter blast and summer heat, occupying themselves with the patch of ground that belongs to the hut—a cruelly insufficient piece of land on which to grow the potatoes and grain that form their food. When the weather permits they will walk miles to the kirk, for they are very devout. When the winter sets in and the storms are too severe to allow of their going out, they sit round the fire in their comfortless huts, and, being rich in folk-lore, tell each other some of the legends handed down from generation to generation. Sometimes they vary this amusement by dancing. They have no books. The newspapers have recently given interesting accounts of the visit of the Commissioners to Stornaway to inquire into the condition of the crofters, and one of them records that in one house they "found an old man with five young children looking sickly and ragged. The general appearance of his house was exceedingly miserable and uncared for. His lot, he said, produced this year upwards of twenty bolls of potatoes, and of these he had seven or eight bolls left; but he had no meal. He had a cow, a heifer, and four sheep, which entered by the same door. There is not even a partition to separate their quarters from the house proper. He explained that he had lost a cow and a stirk last year by starvation. Last spring, too, his family had suffered from want of food, and they had subsisted for a week on what they had borrowed. He had spent three months last summer at the fishing, but just earned what kept him. Another crofter had fished at Stornoway in the summer, and had thus kept his family alive; but his wife stated that he had not been able to save a single shilling for winter needs."

At Stornoway I saw some ragged boys busily catching fish in a way that looked magical. They had a rough stick for a rod, string for a line, and a crooked pin for a hook. What bait they used I do not remember, but never were fishermen more successful! As fast as the line was thrown the fish were caught and put into little tin cans, which, when full, were carried home in triumph to supply the family dinner.

Thus those poor folk who live near the sea are better off than the crofters who live too far from the coast to avail themselves of the fishing.

After a few minutes' chat I took leave of the crofter and his family, and walked back to my elegant carriage, escorted by thirty or forty of the bare-footed children of the village, who evidently thought the English lady as much of a *rara avis* as did the good people of Stornoway when she set out on her travels in the morning.

As I drove home in the sunset I could not but hope that brighter days might soon dawn for these interesting people, whose honesty, industry, and uprightness deserve a better recognition than that accorded to them at present.

If I am asked what is the remedy for the deeper sorrows of the human heart—what a man should chiefly look to in his progress through life, as the power that is to sustain him under trials, and enable him manfully to confront his afflictions—I must point to something which in a well-known hymn is called "The old, old story," told in an old, old book, and taught with an old, old teaching, which is the greatest and best gift ever given to mankind.—*W. E. Gladstone.*

AUNT ETHEL'S "RAINY-DAY CLUB."

BY EMMA C. HEWITT.

THE next day, quite to the children's delight (and secretly, it must be confessed, a little to Aunt Ethel's relief), proved beautiful, so that Howard and Cecile and even Baby Jack, could "have a good time" out of doors. Baby Jack, not understanding the strict regulations upon which the welfare of the Rainy-day Club was founded, rather resented it when Aunt Ethel good-naturedly refused to permit his box and Indian meal to follow him out of doors. He persisted in considering himself a very much injured being for some time, but finally concluded to accept the inevitable, and provide himself with some other amusement.

Meanwhile, Aunt Ethel was providing him with one which he hailed with delight. You see, one great charm of Aunt Ethel's amusements was that they were not allowed to grow too common. So to-day she made for Baby Jack such a doll as she had made for her own boys and girls in days gone by. She took an old red stocking and shaped it into a pair of pantaloons with feet attached; these she stuffed full of cotton-wool. Next, she cut a blue stocking into the shape of a waist and sleeves. Rolling up little pieces of white stocking, she firmly attached these as hands; this also was stuffed with cotton-wool. A third piece of stocking was rolled for the head. Around the supposed neck of this head was closely drawn and tightly sewed the previously stuffed body, and the gentleman was finished, except his hat, which was a scrap of the same blue stocking.

"Now, Baby Jack," said Aunt Ethel, "here is 'Jim Crow.' Come, we'll go and play with him, and we'll find a place to put him. For Jim Crow is not a neat little gentleman, and he must never come in the house."

The child was delighted. He buried him in the sand, he dug him up, he—well, in fact he did everything with that doll that an inventive child *could* do with a doll that could not be injured, no matter what happened to him. A place was found for him, and as the Indian meal never *went out* of the house, Master Jim Crow never *came in*. The history of that long-suffering gentleman would fill a volume. Some day perhaps that volume will be filled for the benefit of the little ones.

But "rainy days" were not long coming, and then the children and Aunt Ethel again held a meeting of "the club." Baby Jack was again established in his box with his meal; this time, however, with the addition of three large black buttons, which he hid in the meal and then hunted for, hailing each new "find" with shouts of exultation.

At the next meeting, having carefully taught him meanwhile to count "1 2 3 4 5," Aunt Ethel substituted five pretty scarlet beads, which were smaller and more difficult to find. And the energy and effort which the little man put forth, under Aunt Ethel's encouraging smile and affectionate words, into the search, and the subsequent counting, had a decidedly good effect in helping to form in him habits of perseverance, play though it was. Mothers scarcely realize the effect a child's *play* has upon his work or his character.

If children are allowed to play at sacred things—church, weddings, funerals, etc., they learn to regard the *reality* very lightly. For a child to be permitted to bury her doll, weep at its funeral, and dress those remaining in "mourning" garb, is sacrilegious. To permit a child to *marry* her doll, and have all the accompanying festivities, is to teach her that *marriage* is a light thing, and that the main things in a wedding are the train, the presents, the lights, the bridal veil, and the wedding journey; and that the *joining of heart and hand, and character and mind for life*, are but small considerations, in comparison with the weighty subjects first mentioned. Children can be taught, and should be taught to exercise forbearance, discretion, judgment, and perseverance in their play as well as in their work, and a judicious mother can do quite as much by *leading* her children in their play as in *counselling* them in their work.

But meanwhile Cecile and Howard are waiting our attention, and I do not believe that it is with a very good grace either. However, it has done them no harm to wait patiently for their elders and Baby Jack a little while.

"Now, Aunt Ethel, for our scrap-book!"

"Not quite yet. You know the mending comes first, Cecile. I know there is a button off Lady Augusta's best white skirt, and I saw yesterday that the gathers were ripped in Diana's blue dress, as well as her arm being loose. You must not let your children feel the need of your care. Come now, for that little thimble and scissors. Now, Howard, what about you? Have you collected anything for the 'mending department' of the 'Rainy-day Club?'"

Howard produced some toys which had been considerably damaged in a variety of ways, and Aunt Ethel soon had him established in the absorbing work of mending.

She laid down a double layer of newspapers on the nursery table, so that what he spilled might do no damage. Then giving him a bottle of Le Page's glue, she allowed him to "stick" to his heart's content, recounting interesting little anecdotes meanwhile of her childhood, as her shining needles clicked away on a pair of the mittens always needed in her own home. After a while the mending was all accomplished, and *then* came the scrap-book.

Aunt Ethel had already prepared her pages of pretty pink, blue, cream-colour, orange, red, and white chintz, by simply notching the edges. These she had left unsewed into book form as yet, in order that each child might conveniently handle his or her own pages on opposite sides of the nursery-table.

Mamma was with them to-day, so while the "busy-bees," as mamma playfully called them, were hard at work, with flushed faces, placing each picture where it would look best, being guided a little by suggestions from their elders, mamma and auntie had plenty of time to talk and knit and sew in comfort.

"Now, children," said Aunt Ethel at last, "mamma says we may collect a Noah's Ark. You must separate all the pictures of animals. We will paste them in a row, all round the lower part of the wall. We will put them so low down that Baby Jack can see them. He can help, too, for he can pick the animals out from the rest."

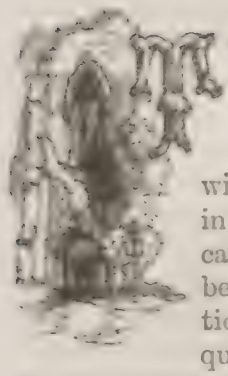
Baby Jack of course was delighted, and having thoroughly

grasped the idea that the children were to be allowed the unheard-of privilege and delight of pasting things on the *wall*, he gravely got down from his chair, and with all the business importance imaginable, his small tongue was quickly brought forth, and a gaily-coloured leopard was planted as high up as his small arms could reach, its four helpless legs sticking up in the air, while its poor back rested on nothing.

This set them all laughing, much to Baby Jack's disgust, but it was soon explained and the leopard changed to its proper position. Soon there were a dozen animals running along the surbase, but then the supply gave out. The children had now an added interest for the next "Rainy-day meeting," and in the meantime they were on the alert to hunt up all pictures of animal life. Baby Jack caught at every scrap of paper, and finally came in triumphant one day. He had found an "animal." It was a *honey-bee*, but at the next rainy day, Baby Jack's "animal" was accorded a place of honour, by being the first fixed in place.

JANE AUSTEN.

BY MRS. HENRY FAWCETT.



THERE is very little story to tell in the life of Jane Austen. She was one of the greatest writers of English fiction; but her own life, like the life she describes with such extraordinary and minute accuracy in her tales, had no startling incidents, no catastrophes. The solid ground never shook beneath her feet; neither she nor the relations and neighbours with whom her tranquil life was passed were ever swept away by the whirlwind of wild passions, nor overwhelmed by tragic destiny. The ordinary, everyday joys and sorrows that form a part of the lives of all of us, were hers; but nothing befel her more sensational or wondrous than what falls to the lot of most of us. This even tenor of her own way she reproduces with marvellous skill in the pages of her novels. It has been well said that "every village could furnish matter for a novel to Miss Austen." The material which she used is within the reach of every one; but she stands alone, hitherto quite unequalled, for the power of investing with charm and interest these incidents in the everyday life of everyday people which are the whole subject-matter of her six finished novels. A silly elopement on the part of one of the five Miss Bennets in "Pride and Prejudice," and the fall which stuns Louisa Musgrove in "Persuasion," when she insists on jumping off the cob at Lyme, are almost the only incidents in her books that can even be called unusual. Her novels remind us of pictures we sometimes see which contain no one object of supreme or extraordinary loveliness, but which charm by showing us the beauty and interest in that which lies around us on every side. There is a picture by Frederick Walker, called "A Rainy Day," which is a very good instance of this; it is nothing but a village street just by a curve in the road; the houses are such as may be seen in half the villages in England: a dog goes along looking as dejected as dogs always do in the rain, the light is reflected in the puddles of the wet road, one foot-passenger only has ventured out. There is nothing in the picture but what we may all of us have seen hundreds and thousands of times, and yet one could look and look at it for hours and never weary of the charm of quiet, truthful beauty it contains. This is one of the things which true artists, whether their art is painting pictures or writing books, can do for those who are not artists—that is, help them to see and feel the beauty and interest of the ordinary surroundings of everyday life. Robert Browning makes a great Italian painter say:—

> "We're made so that we love
> First when we see them painted, things we have passed
> Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
> And so they are better painted—better to us,
> Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
> God uses us to help each other so,
> Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,
> Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,
> And trust me, but you should, though! How much more
> If I drew higher things with the same truth!
> That were to take the Prior's pulpit place,
> Interpret God to all of you."

*Jane Austen was a clergyman's daughter, born in 1775 at the Vicarage of Steventon, about seven miles from Basingstoke, in Hampshire. Here she lived, for the first twenty-five years of her life, the quiet family life of most young ladies of similar circumstances; two of her brothers were in the Navy, one was a country gentleman, having inherited an estate from a cousin, another was a clergyman. The most dearly loved by Jane of all her family was her sister Cassandra, older than herself by three years. The sisters were so inseparable that when Cassandra went to school, Jane, though too young to profit much by the instruction given, was sent also, because it would have been cruel to separate the sisters; her mother said, "If Cassandra were going to have her head cut off, Jane would insist on sharing her fate." The devotion between the sisters was life-long. Their characters were not much alike; Cassandra was colder, calmer, and more reserved than her sister, whose sweet temper and affectionate disposition specially endeared her to all her family; but Jane throughout her life relied upon Cassandra as one who was wiser and stronger than herself. The quiet family life at Steventon was diversified by one or two visits to Bath, then a very fashionable resort; a short visit to Lyme is spoken of later on; and in the early days in the vicarage the Austen children not infrequently amused themselves with private theatricals. Readers of "North-

* A very interesting memoir of Miss Austen has been written by her nephew, Mr. Austen Leigh. All who love her works should read it, and thereby come to know and love the woman.

anger Abbey," "Persuasion," and "Mansfield Park" will find these mild amusements woven into the web of the story; for, as Jane Austen says herself, she was like a bird who uses the odd bits of wool or moss in the hedgerows near to weave into the tiny fabric of its nest. The plays which the Austens acted were frequently written by themselves. This may probably have given to Jane her early impulse to authorship. It is not improbable that it also smoothed the way of her career as a writer in another sense; for at that time very great prejudice still existed in many people's minds against women who were writers. Lord Granville, speaking in December, 1887, at the unveiling of the statue of the Queen at Holloway College, cited a great French writer who had laid it down as an axiom that a woman could commit no greater fault than to be learned; the same writer had said—of course partly in joke—that it is enough knowledge for any woman if she is acquainted with the fact that Pekin is not in Europe, or that Alexander the Great was not the son-in-law of Louis the XIV. Referring to events within his own knowledge and memory, Lord Granville added, "One of the most eminent English statesmen of the century, a brilliant man of letters himself, after reading with admiration a beautiful piece of poetry written by his daughter, appealed to her affection for him to prevent her ever writing again, his fear was so great lest she should be thought a literary woman."

If a similar prejudice were in any degree felt by the Austen family, it is not unlikely that it was gradually dissolved by the early habit of the children of writing plays for home acting. We read, indeed, that Jane did nearly all her writing in the general sitting-room of the family, and that she was careful to keep her occupation secret from all but her own immediate relations. For this purpose she wrote on small pieces of paper, which could easily be put away or covered by a piece of blotting-paper or needlework. The little mahogany desk at which she wrote is still preserved in the family. She never put her name on a titlepage, but there is no evidence that her family would have disapproved of her doing so. They seem to have delighted in all she did, and to have helped her by every means in their power. She was a great favourite with her brothers and sister, and with all the tribe of nephews and nieces that grew up about her. She had no trace of any assumption of superiority, and gave herself no airs of any kind. She had too much humour and sense of fun for there to be any danger of this in her case. She was thoroughly womanly in her habits, manners, and occupations. Like Miss Martineau, her early training preserved her from being a literary lady who could not sew. Her needlework was remarkably fine and dainty, and specimens of it are still preserved which show that her fingers had the same deftness and skill as the mind which created Emma Woodhouse and her father, Mrs. Norris and Elizabeth Bennet. She had taken to authorship as a duck takes to water, and had written some of her most remarkable books before she was twenty; and she had done this so simply and naturally that she seems to have produced in her family the impression that writing first-rate novels was one of the easiest things in the world. We find, for instance, that she writes in 1814 many letters of advice to a novel-writing niece; and she advises another little niece to cease writing till she is sixteen years old, the child being at that time only ten or twelve. In 1816 she addresses a very interesting letter to a nephew who is writing a novel, and has had the misfortune to lose two chapters and a half! She makes kindly fun of the young gentleman, and suggests that if she finds his lost treasure she shall engraft his chapters into her own novel; but she adds: "I do not think, however, that any theft of that sort would be really very useful to me. What should I do with your strong, manly, vigorous sketches, full of variety and glow? How could I possibly join them on to the little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush as produces little effect after much labour?"

Jane Austen.

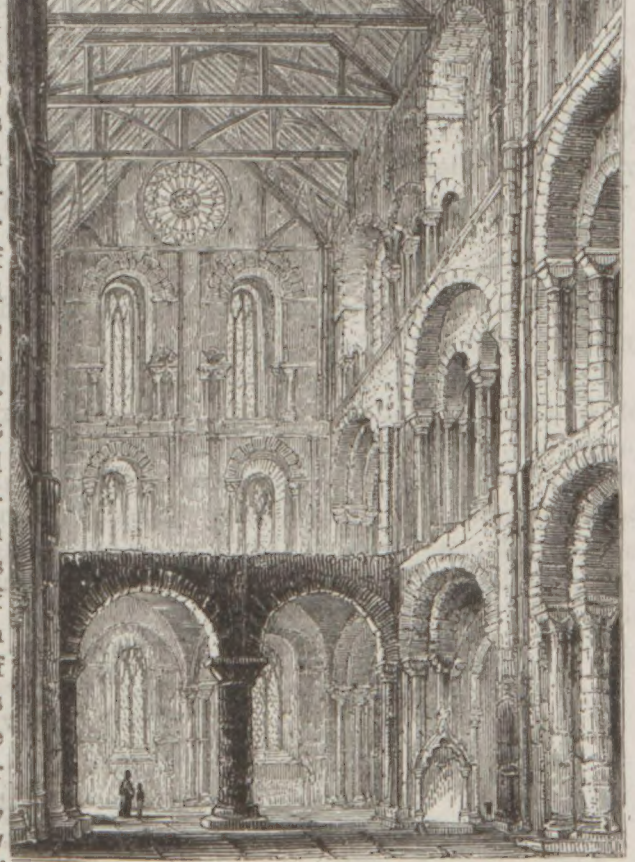
Early in 1801 the home at Steventon was broken up. Mr. Austen resigned his living in consequence of failing health, and the family removed to Bath. Mr. Austen died in 1805, and Mrs. Austen and her daughters lived for a time at Southampton. They had no really home-like home, however, between leaving Steventon in 1801 and settling at Chawton, in Hampshire, in 1809; and it is very characteristic of Jane Austen's home-loving nature that this homeless period was also a period of literary inactivity. She wrote "Sense and Sensibility," "Northanger Abbey," and "Pride and Prejudice" before she left Steventon, though none of them were published till after she came to live at Chawton. Here in her second home she wrote "Mansfield Park," "Emma," and "Persuasion." In consequence of having three novels finished before one was printed, when she once began to publish, her works appeared in rapid succession. "Sense and Sensibility" was the first to appear in 1811, and the others followed quickly after one another, for her work was at once appreciated by the public, and the great leaders of the literary world, such as Sir Walter Scott, Southey and

Coleridge, welcomed her with cordial and generous praise. One curious little adventure should be mentioned. In 1803, during her residence at Bath she had sold the manuscript of "Northanger Abbey" to a Bath publisher for £10. This good man, on reconsideration, evidently thought he had made a bad bargain, and resolved to lose his ten pounds rather than risk a larger sum in printing and publishing the book. The manuscript therefore lay on his shelves for many years quite forgotten. But the time came when "Sense and Sensibility," "Pride and Prejudice," and "Mansfield Park" had placed their author in the first rank of English writers, and it occurred to Miss Austen and her family that it might be well to rescue "Northanger Abbey" from its unappreciative possessor. One of her brothers called on the Bath publisher and negotiated with him the re-purchase of the manuscript, giving for it the same sum which had been paid to the author about ten years earlier. The publisher was delighted to get back his £10, which he had never expected to see again, and Jane Austen's brother was delighted to get back the manuscript. Both parties to the bargain were fully satisfied; but the poor publisher's feelings would have been very different if he had known that the neglected manuscript with which he had so joyfully parted was by the author of the most successful novels of the day.

There is a quiet vein of fun and humorous observation running through all Miss Austen's writings. It is as visible in her private letters to her friends as in her works intended for publication. The little turns of expression are not reproduced, but the humour of the one is very similar to that of the other. Thus, for instance, in one of her letters she describes a visit to a young lady at school in London. Jane Austen had left her a raw schoolgirl, and found her on this visit developed into a fashionable young lady. "Her hair," writes Jane to Cassandra, "is done up with an elegance to do credit to any education." Who can read this without thinking of Fanny Price in "Mansfield Park," and the inevitable contempt she inspired in her fashionable cousins because she did not know French and had but one sash?

Reference has already been made to the high appreciation of Miss Austen's genius which has been expressed by the highest literary authorities in her own time and in ours. Sir Walter Scott wrote in his journal: "I have read again, and for the third time, Miss Austen's very finely-written novel of 'Pride and Prejudice.' That young lady has a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big Bow-Wow strain I can do myself like any now going, but the exquisite touch which renders commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the descriptive and the sentiment is denied to me." Lord Macaulay, the great historian, wrote in his diary: "Read Dickens's 'Hard Times' and another book of Pliny's 'Letters.' Read 'Northanger Abbey,' worth all Dickens and Pliny put together. Yet it was the work of a girl. She was certainly not more than twenty-six. Wonderful creature!" Guizot, the French historian, was a great novel reader, and he delighted in English novels, especially those written by women. Referring to the women writers of the beginning of this century, of whom Miss Austen was the chief, he said that their works "form a school which, in the excellence and profusion of its productions, resembles the cloud of dramatic authors of the great Athenian age." The late Mr. G. H. Lewes said he would rather have written "Pride and Prejudice" than any of the Waverley novels. George Eliot calls Jane Austen the greatest artist that has ever written, "using the term 'artist' to signify the most perfect master over the means to her end." It is perhaps only fair to state that some good judges do not entertain so high an opinion of her work. Madame de Stael pronounced against her, using the singularly inappropriate word "vulgar," in condemnation of her work. If there is a writer in the world free from vulgarity in its ordinary sense, it is Jane Austen; it must be supposed that Madame de Stael used the word in its French sense, in which it often means merely "commonplace" or "ordinary," such a meaning of the word as is retained in our English expression "the vulgar tongue." Charlotte Brontë felt in Miss Austen a deficiency in poetic imagination, in the high tone of sentiment which elevates the prose of everyday life into poetry. She found her shrewd and observant rather than sagacious and profound. "Miss Austen's writings were so essentially different from the highly imaginative work of her sister author that it is not surprising that the younger failed somewhat in appreciation of the elder writer.

Jane Austen's failing health in 1816 caused much anxiety to her family. It is characteristic of her gentle thoughtfulness for all about her that she never could be induced to use the one sofa with which the family sitting-room was provided. Her mother, who was more than seventy years old, often used the sofa, and Jane would never occupy it, even in her mother's absence, preferring to contrive for herself a sort of couch formed with two or three chairs. A little niece, puzzled that "Aunt Jane" preferred this arrangement, drew from her the explanation that if she used the sofa in her mother's absence, Mrs. Austen would probably abstain from using it as much as was good for her. Her last book, "Persuasion," was finished while she was suffering very much from what proved to be her dying illness. Weak health did not in any way diminish her industry, and she exacted from herself the utmost perfection that she felt she was capable of giving to her work. The last chapters of "Persuasion" were cancelled and re-written because her first conclusion of the story did not satisfy her. In May, 1817, she and her sister removed to Winchester in order that Jane might have skilled medical advice. Here she died on July 18th, and was buried opposite Wykeham's Chantry, in the cathedral. Her sweetness of temper and her gentle gaiety never failed her throughout a long and trying illness. When the end was near, one of those with her asked if there was anything she wanted; her reply was, *"Nothing but death."*



Wykeham's Chantry, Winchester Cathedral.

MOTHERS I HAVE HEARD OF.

A Mother who was a Drinker

BY WILLIAM LUFF,

Author of "About Jesus," "About our Father," etc.

THE father was a cabman, but as we want neither "four-wheeler" nor "hansom," we will dismiss that gentleman of high position and authority. Our story is about the mother, so to her we will turn our attention. She had two children living in a home (if a drinking mother can have a home) in the very centre of London. Often have I gone to a little mission-room near by, and told the story of salvation to the poor creatures who filled the courts and alleys.

It was Sunday. The street hawkers had been crying their vegetables, the butcher had been praising his joints, while a quack medicine-vender had done his best to cure the sick folk of all the ills that flesh is heir to. The mother of whom I write had done her small share of marketing, which ought to have been done Saturday night, only she was a drinker—not a drunkard—dear no! This Sunday marketing was evil No. 1.

Then the children had only one set of clothes, and an odd set that, for even the stockings were not in pairs. They might have had more, but mother was a drinker, hence a scarcity of garments was evil No. 2.

Of course clothes sometimes want washing: for dirty streets, dirty houses, and dirty hands always bring about dirty linen, and a remedy in the form of soap and water has to be found. Not too often, lest the few tattered garments wear out; but just for decency's sake, say once a month, for is not cleanliness next to godliness; and if so, what better washing-day than Sunday? So water was boiled, soap lathered up, and soon the place was filled with steam. Here was evil No. 3, in the guise of Sunday work.

Now this led to evil No. 4; for the clothes could not be scrubbed upon the children's backs, so they must be taken off their backs, and as no others were in stock to replace them, the children's backs were left bare. Of course they could not be sent to Sunday-school with bare backs, therefore of necessity they had to stay at home and lie in bed, while other children heard the sweet story of old, and sang,

"Jesus loves me! this I know,
For the Bible tells me so."

Here were four evils, all springing out of the fact that mother was a drinker, not a drunkard—dear no!

The washing over, the washed articles were hung in front of the fire to forward drying, and shorten the period of forced nakedness. But if it was hard for the children to be without their raiment, it was still harder for their mother to be kept without her little drops. Sunday morning always seemed a longer morning than any other; somehow, it took the clock longer to tick off the hour from twelve to one on that day.

At last the happy moment of deliverance drew near, not for the babes, but for the parent. She heard the bolts drawn across the way, that the door might be ready to open the moment the clock struck. She did not patronize that particular house, her favourite was round the corner. But happy would it have been for that mother if those houses had not been open at all, on that day.

Rolling down her sleeves and adjusting her apron, she locked the children in and hastened to the delights of the glass, where she soon forgot all but her own craving thirst. A neglected home, left to take care of itself; two stripped children without a guardian, because mother is a drinker, not a drunkard—dear no!

They had romped and played until their weak bodies had become tired. Now they had fallen asleep. Meanwhile the garments before the fire had lost their moisture. The fire began to coax them towards itself, and at last, kissing them with its ruby lips, set them in flames. No mother was there to see the danger, which spread as only fire can spread. The old bed with its rags and bedding was soon its prey, as it crept like a fiery serpent, nearer the sleeping forms. As the windows were shut, the smoke was some time in escaping; and even when seen, no one at first took any notice, thinking it the steam from the wash-tub.

But a feeble cry was heard and the awful truth became manifest, the room was on fire. Dashing up the stairs a neighbour sought to reach the little ones; but the door was locked, and the dense smoke drove the would-be deliverer back.

And while her children were burning, that woman was round the corner drinking. "Fire! Fire! Fire!" rang through the street, and stopping to drain her much-loved glass, she left the counter to see what was the matter.

Here was evil indeed, the greatest evil—her room in a blaze and her children lost; why? Because mother was a drinker.

When the firemen came it was too late to think of saving life; all they could do was to quench the flames. Then followed the sad search for the dead. Well do I remember the fireman who first entered telling me what he saw. The door was still locked, and owing to fallen rubbish, could not be opened, so an entrance was made through the window, and there the two children were found, kneeling upon the bed, their heads buried in the pillow as if trying to hide from the smoke and fire.

Mother, look at them! Look at those little bare heels, black and burnt. There, they are in their shells now; look into those faces that have escaped the disfigurement of a cruel death. You slew those innocents. You meant it not? True. You were only a drinker? True, but the babes are dead. Give it up, mothers, one and all, for the sake of other children who still live.

DRESS AND DRESSMAKING.

March, with its blustering winds, always brings with it some token that spring has actually arrived, and most people experience a little desire to brighten up their attire, and put at least a few of their winter garments out of sight. It is, however, a very dangerous proceeding to leave off any wraps or to put on a thinner dress, for even if we have mild weather in January and February, the east wind makes its unwelcome appearance in March, and it is often colder than in the depth of winter.

There is no colour more worn this spring than a downright sapphire blue, and it is made in every material, and looks particularly well in the soft woollen fabrics that have plush stripes and patterns woven into their substance. The same kind of thing is made in black and white, with a shepherd's plaid foundation. This is always a lady's dress, but it is not economical for any save country wear. But given a country life and a checked, woollen, or châlé, or camel's hair dress will wash like a pockethandkerchief, and can be made up afresh and re-trimmed as long as there is a bit of it left, a quality that makes it useful and popular with girls living at home, who may have a small dress allowance and plenty of time on their hands.

Every kind of green is also fashionable this spring, from delicate apple and pea greens for evening dresses, down to dark shades of emerald and myrtle green in cashmeres, vicunas and the new nun's veilings, which are thicker than the old ones, and drape so remarkably well. Dark greens suit both pale and rosy complexions, and the colour is one that in a good material never gets rusty or common-looking.

The dress we have sketched is intended to be in two shades of brown, or brown and beige. The skirt and bodice are of beige vicuna, with brown velvet trimming cut out of the piece and laid on. Two stripes of the same velvet laid on a strip of the material lined with muslin form the panel, and the centre width has velvet half way up under the drapery. A narrow kilting at the bottom of the foundation skirt gives a nice finish and sets out the petticoat a little, so that the feet do not knock against the hem and cause it to come undone, a very frequent evil, and sometimes the cause of an accident in stepping into a vehicle or going upstairs.

Good passementerie ornaments are very expensive to buy, and, moreover, difficult to obtain, for even in some of the best shops the groundwork of them is jute, and the beads are sewn on with cotton. A girl who is clever with the crochet-hook will, however, see that she can very easily make them with a skein or two of good silk purse twist, threaded with black or moonlight beads, and a few added afterwards in strings of three or five just where they will hang over the top of the sleeve will make the ornament really good and lasting. Makers of the best trimmings use a great deal of crochet, both in ornaments and buttons. Perhaps it will assist some young person who tries her hand in this way to add that double crochet is principally used, and that if it is wanted very bold and firm the stitches can be done over a fine black silk cord, such as is used with watches and eye-glasses. Tatting with coarse black silk also makes beautiful passementerie, especially for those who eschew beads. It is often desirable to have a little fancy work in hand, and this is fancy work of a very utilitarian kind in its application.

An extremely pretty and inexpensive style of making gowns for evening wear may give a wrinkle to those who wish to adapt a half-worn silk dress for this purpose, or to make one suitable either for summer or for dressy occasions. Buy a few yards of plain or fancy ribbon about a couple of inches wide, and make of it three pretty bows with shortish ends, and one with a long loop and two ends, one shorter than the loop and one longer. Sew the last on the right hand side of your skirt where it appears to catch up the drapery, and sew one of the smaller ones on your elbow sleeves, not on the back but on the inside of the arm. The bodice must be made with a V-shaped vest, extending nearly to the waist, and at the bottom of the opening place the third bow.

The full ruche, made of pinked-out silk, so much used at the bottom of foundation skirts about four years ago, has regained its place in popular favour. It is very much of a dust-trap, except for an evening gown, and to this it not only adds a finish, but it can easily be made of dyed silk. It is, indeed, one of the few uses to which dyed silk can be satisfactorily put.

The mantles fashionable this spring are small and very easily made at home, as they are in only three pieces, one of which simulates a sleeve. They look extremely well with a sash behind, but are more suitable to many figures and neater without it. A very pretty trimming is a pinked-out double ruche of silk, or it is still newer to snick the edges out in small vandykes with the scissors than to pink it out. Or, if you have a little good feather trimming laid by, shake and rub it out, and use it. Fur looks well, but is rather heavy for a spring mantle; still, it can be taken off and lace substituted for it as the weather gets warmer, and if the fur is sewn up in a linen bag no moths will get at it.

The flat patterns of the bodice and front drapery, shewn in our illustration, can be had by enclosing 9½d. in stamps to M. L., at the Office of the Mothers' Companion. *The price of the mantle pattern is 6½d. Every effort will be made to supply the patterns promptly, but we cannot guarantee to send them by return of post.*

BREAKFASTS AND SUPPERS.

HARD workers often depend more upon having a substantial meal at the beginning and end than in the middle of the day, when they are often far from home, or unable to spare the time to dine.

This series of papers will therefore give directions for simple but nourishing suppers and breakfasts, the cost being kept as low as possible. In order, however, to give variety and means to suit all incomes, the expense will not always be the same, but will never exceed sixpence per head for both meals.

The same family party will be catered for as in the previous papers (*i.e.*, six persons, of whom three are children); and as the food prepared for supper will often help out the breakfast *menu*, the directions for the supper will be given first.

Supper 1.—Sheep's head scalloped, baked potatoes, bread and butter.

Breakfast 1.—Oatmeal porridge, sheep's head mould, bread and butter.

Those who have not yet tried these dishes made from a sheep's head will be surprised to find how delicately flavoured they are, as well as digestible and nourishing. It is often possible to procure a sheep's head at a very low price in summer (as this part of the animal does not keep long), and thus to secure a good dish at a small expense.

Sheep's Head Scalloped.

Materials.—A sheep's head; bread-crumbs, ½ lb.; chopped parsley 1 teaspoonful; pepper and salt.

Directions.—Wash the head thoroughly in cold water, rinse it under the tap, and let it soak all night, just covered with cold water, and a little salt. After dinner the next day, put it into a saucepan in the same water, and simmer it (without boiling) for three or four hours, until the meat comes easily off the bones. Take the head out, and let the broth boil till it is reduced to half a pint.

Pick all the meat from the bones, skin the tongue, cut it all in slices, and take half of the meat (including the brains) for scalloping. Grease a shallow tin dish, line it with bread-crumbs, lay the meat in it, with pepper and salt to taste, cover with bread-crumbs, and bake in a hot oven till brown (about half an hour will be necessary for this, but no certain time can be given, as ovens are so different). Serve in the tin dish, hot.—Time, 5 hours.

Baked Potatoes.

Materials.—1½ lb. potatoes.

Directions.—Choose the largest potatoes, scrub them well with a small brush, rinse them, and put them in hottest part of the oven on a tin dish. Take the tin out in twenty minutes' time, re-arrange the potatoes, so that all may get equal heat: repeat this process twenty minutes later. Then place the tin in the cooler part of the oven, and bake them for two hours, slowly. Serve in the skins, in a clean folded napkin, with cold butter, pepper and salt.—Time, 3 hours.

Children should not have meat for supper as a rule; a simple dish will therefore be provided for them such as this. Baked potatoes are far more digestible than boiled; they should be cut open on the plate, and a bit of butter put in, salt being sprinkled over the potato when scooped out with a spoon. Children should not be allowed to eat the skins, as they are very much like burnt cork, and are most unwholesome.

The elders of the party will find these potatoes a nice addition to the scalloped sheep's head.

BREAKFAST.

Sheep's Head Mould.

Materials.—Half the meat from a sheep's head, 2 eggs, chopped parsley, and lemon-thyme, each half a teaspoonful, pepper and salt. The stock from the sheep's head.

Directions.—Take the half of the meat of the sheep's head, chop it fine, and mix with it the parsley, thyme, and a little pepper and salt. Boil the eggs for a quarter of an hour till hard, take them out of their shells, and cut each in three neat pieces. Dip a small pie-dish or mould in cold water, arrange the pieces of hard egg in a circle in it, while wet; then cover them with the minced sheep's head, without disturbing their positions. Press it down, and pour the half-pint of stock over it all. Let it stand till morning, when it will turn out well. Serve cold, on a paper. Time, 1 hour.

Oatmeal Porridge.

Materials.—Oatmeal, 1 teacupful; water, 3 pints; salt, ½ teaspoonful.

Directions.—Make the water boil, sprinkle the salt and meal in gradually with a dry spoon, stirring it with another all the time. Let it boil for ten minutes (stirred sharply), then put it on the hob to simmer for half an hour. Serve hot in soup-plates, with sugar or salt as preferred, and cold milk. Time, 40 minutes.

There is an easier way of making porridge, by mixing the meal smoothly in cold water, and adding it to the rest of the water when it boils, boiling for ten minutes (stirred), and then simmering for half an hour as above. The secret of good porridge is to cook it slowly after the first ten minutes, and to give it plenty of time. It should not be lumpy, and neither too thick nor too thin; but tastes differ as to this. Some like it thick enough to turn out of a small basin, after standing a few minutes, when it can be turned into a soup-plate, and milk poured over it. Porridge is the best possible breakfast for those who like it, as it is very strengthening and digestible.

Cost of Materials for Supper and Breakfast.

Sheep's head, 7d.; bread, 6d.; parsley and thyme, 1d.; butter, 4d.; eggs, 2d.; potatoes, 2d.; oatmeal, 1d.; milk, 4d.; sugar, salt, etc., 1d. Total, 2s. 4d.

Average 4¾d. per head for six persons.

I. L. Richmond.